BATRISODES ADNEXUS (HAMPE) (*B. BUQUETI* AUCTT. BRIT.) AND *B. DELAPORTI* (AURÉ) (COL.: PSELAPHIDAE) IN BRITAIN

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THERE ARE three British species of *Batrisodes* Reitter, adequately separated by Joy (1932) and by Pearce (1957) (once it is realised that his "slender" and "robust" with reference to the antennae in couplet 1 should be transposed (Allen, 1960), and that it is *B. delaporti* that may be recognised by its robust antennae with segments 5-7 strongly transverse). All of the British species are myrmecophilous, *B. venustus* least strictly so and occasionally found under bark or in rotten wood. Records of *B. venustus* are widely distributed throughout England from South Hampshire to as far north as Cumberland, though the species is very local and generally uncommon. Neither *B. adnexus* nor *B. delaporti* have, until now, been reported outside the Windsor area. Both species are closely associated with the ant *Lasius brunneus* (Latreille).

B. adnexus has been found on very few occasions since it was first taken with *L. brunneus* in Windsor Great Park, by H.StJ.K. Donisthorpe on 25th June 1924 (Donisthorpe, 1924). Bedwell (1926) took the second Windsor specimen on 11th July 1925, and on 30th June 1926 Donisthorpe found the third, in Windsor Forest, again associated with a nest of *L. brunneus* (Donisthorpe, 1927). A.A. Allen took the fourth British specimen, a female, in August 1939 "in a rotten oak stump which held a small colony of the ant *Acanthomyops (Donisthorpea) niger* L. in Windsor Forest." (Allen, 1946). Since that time I know of only one additional record, other than my own. My friend Prof. J.A. Owen found a single female in wood mould taken from the centre of a fallen ancient oak in Windsor Great Park on 12th August 1986. The tree held a large nest of *L. brunneus*.

On a visit to an area of Epping Forest near Chingford, South Essex, on 15th March, 1987, I was fortunate to find an old oak, *Quercus robur* L. with a large rot hole allowing easy access to the heartwood, in which there was a thriving colony of *L. brunneus*. I sieved a sample of the nest through a standard garden sieve in the hope of finding myrmecophilous Coleoptera but found nothing. Hoping for more success with a Winkler extractor, I took the sievings home. My single extractor was in use, so I put the sample in a rearing tub instead. This consisted of an inner bucket (filled to the brim with the sample) inside a slightly larger white plastic tub with a close-fitting lid. In August, the same year, *Batrisodes* began to emerge and on dropping over the edge of the inner bucket were easily seen against the white surface of the tub. Once the first few specimens had been found in this way, the contents of the bucket were carefully examined and in total nine *Batrisodes* were collected, including one which was entirely yellow and presumably teneral. To my surprise, they proved to be *B. adnexus*. Unfortunately, all

were females. Although the sample was kept a further 18 months no other beetles emerged. Single specimens have been given to Mr A.A. Allen, Dr C. Besuchet, Dr P.S. Hyman and Prof. J.A. Owen. Mr Allen and Prof. Owen have confirmed that the Epping specimens are conspecific with their Windsor *B. adnexus*.

In recent years there have been different opinions as to the name that should be applied to our species. Dr C. Besuchet was first to question the occurrence of the true *B. adnexus* in Britain (Pearce, 1974) but the absence of sufficient material for study prevented Pearce from deciding whether the British species was *B. adnexus* or *B. buqueti* (Aubé), a closely related species not uncommon in France. Besuchet (1974) again cast doubt on the identity of the few British specimens, a doubt reflected by Pope (1977) who listed the British species as "*adnexus* auct. Brit.? (Hampe, 1863)". Hammond (1987) adopted the name *B. buqueti* for our species. Although on the basis of European distribution it was reasonable for Besuchet to question the identity of British specimens, there has not yet been any good reason for calling the British species *B. buqueti*. The problem is that to date all of the British specimens have apparently been females which are considerably more difficult to identify with certainty than are males. However, a significant character, evident in all British specimens, appears to be the small but distinct pointed tubercle at the elytral shoulders which is not found in female *B. buqueti* (Besuchet, 1988). Besuchet has identified one of the Epping specimens as *B. adnexus,* but with reservations, "Il faudrait au moins un mâle pour confirmer définitivement *adnexus* pour la Grande-Bretagne." (*in lit.*).

In conclusion, there is no firm evidence to support the suggestion that the species known as *B. adnexus* in Britain is really *B. buqueti,* and no evidence at all that both species occur here. However, female *B. adnexus* are extremely difficult to determine with absolute certainty and a male specimen has yet to be recognised in Britain. It is possible that our species is parthenogenetic as probably is the closely related and recently described *B. unisexualis* Besuchet on the continent (Besuchet, 1988).

B. delaporti is a much less uncommon species in the Windsor Forest area and probably occurs in the majority of well established *L. brunneus* nests, as it was said to by Donisthorpe (1939). These are most frequently found in the dead heartwood of ancient living oaks and must take many years to excavate. Working such nests for Coleoptera can be seriously damaging and it is perhaps fortunate that many are so inaccessible.

According to Hammond (1987) *B. delaporti* is only known from the Windsor Forest area including nearby Silwood Park, where R.C. Welch collected five specimens in 1964. In the Claude Morley Collection at Ipswich Museum are a male and female *B. delaporti* labelled in Morley's hand, "*Batrisodes delaportei* NF. 30vi26 with *Lasius brunneus* (Don)." "NF" is Morley's usual abbreviation for "New Forest". Although it is vaguely possible that the specimens did come from the New Forest, I

suspect that they have been mis-labelled. Donisthorpe discovered *B. delaporti* in Windsor Forest in 1924 (Donisthorpe, 1924) and over the few years following found over 100 specimens (Donisthorpe, 1927); more than enough "duplicates" to distribute amongst friends and colleagues. From Morley's collection it is evident that Donisthorpe used to send him "duplicates" of rarities and species new to the British list. From Morley's entomological diaries (also at Ipswich Museum) it seems that Morley was in Suffolk, not the New Forest, on 30th June 1926. However, Donisthorpe was collecting in Windsor Forest on that day, the very same day he found his second example of *B. adnexus*! Finally, according to Barrett (1979), *L. brunneus* is not known to occur in the New Forest. It is worth drawing attention to these specimens in case they are noticed in the future and the record accepted without question.

Acknowledgements

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Cyphostethus tristriatus (F.) (Hem.: Acanthosomatidae) in S.E. London, and its occurrence on *Thuja orientalis* L.

In a note recording this shieldbug from East Surrey (1984, *Ent. Rec.* **96**: 187) I hazarded a guess that it might before very long turn up in my more suburban district. This "prophecy" has now been fulfilled: on 12th May 1991, I found it to be not at all uncommon in the warm afternoon sunshine on a short boundary-hedge between my own and my neighbour's garden. This consists of young trees of Lawson Cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), none exceeding head height. The bugs favour one of them in particular, with large dense masses of purplish-glaucous young cones weighing down the foliage; one appeared to have its rostrum plunged right up to the base into such a cone. I have just (12th June) taken another look at this tree, and, in bright sunshine, counted a dozen of these colourful insects, including several pairs, in about as many seconds — though, strangely, none were apparent on any of the others. They are sluggish and seem to remain motionless for long periods, often half-hidden, yet conspicuous enough from their colouring.

On 12th May I detected a specimen on one of two smallish trees, also cone-bearing, of Chinese Thuja (*Thuja orientalis*) in a local park, and another on the same tree on 2nd June. (Mr Bernard Verdcourt, of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, kindly identified a sample.) It seemed possible, at least up to the second date, that the *Cyphostethus* might have strayed on to this tree from nearby Lawson cypresses; but against that is the occurrence of two specimens, and (still more perhaps) my inability up to now to find the bug on any of the last-named — which is curious. Indeed, I have kept a sharp look-out for it on this and other related potential hosts elsewhere in the district, but without result up to now; these include Western Red Cedar (*Thuja plicata*), Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) — not adequately searched — and Savin (*Juniperus sabina*). I have seldom seen berries on the latter, which may be why it seems hitherto not to harbour *C. tristiatus* notwithstanding that the bug's wild host in Britain is *J. communis*.

Though doubtless now well established in the London area, my experience suggests that the species may be very local, or perhaps situation may be important. Mr Verdcourt informs me (in litt.) that he does not know of it from Kew Gardens; he has however, a record from "cypress" in a garden at Richmond Hill (1.vii.87). A number of bugs were found, and also their blue-green eggs on the young cones.— A.A. ALLEN, 49 Montcalm Road, Charlton, London SE7 8QG.